

*The Christian's Consolation in Life and in
Death.*

A

FUNERAL SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

ENGLISH CHURCH AT ROTTERDAM,

JUNE 10, 1798,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

The Rev. THOMAS GREAVES,

SENIOR PASTOR.

By JOHN HALL.

———"Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

JOHN xiv. 1.

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FOR THE YEAR 1791

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EXORDIUM.

MY BRETHREN,

UNDER the heavy pressure of the troubles of human life, to which, Job saith, man is born as the sparks fly upward,—under those troubles from which none are exempt, where shall we fly for succour and support? To what resource shall we apply for consolation, either when we are lamenting the death of our relatives, friends, and fellow Christians, or when we are under the apprehension of the near approach of our own death? Will the light of reason and nature give us the desired consolation? Will boasted philosophy give it us? These are but broken reeds, which will only wound the hand that would rest itself upon them.—

It is religion, and the religion of Jesus alone, which can administer the efficacious cordial.

What can nature or philosophy teach us concerning the state of the dead? But the religion of Jesus instructs us in this mystery. The glorious Son of Righteousness hath shed its cheering rays into the tomb; enlightened the darkness, and dissipated the gloom of that solitary mansion. The Lord of life and glory hath unbarred the gates of death, and ransomed us from the grave.

The voice of nature saith man must die. The voice of philosophy counsels him to bear it with patience, or with a stoical apathy—but gives him *no hope*. But hear the voice of religion—a voice from heaven—the voice of an angel—the voice of Jesus—the voice of God.

REVELATIONS xiv. 13.

*And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me,
Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,
from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they
may rest from their labours; and their works do
follow them.*

It is not necessary, that to a christian audience I should employ this hour in laying before you the evidences of our holy religion. You are professed believers of it; you are not now to learn the first principles of the oracles of God. You have been instructed in the ground of your faith, the firm basis on which it rests, which all the efforts of sophism and infidelity can never undermine.

Would unbelievers persuade us, that our holy religion is only a dream and a delusion—It is a dream so pleasing—a delusion so transporting, that in this error (if it is an error) I wish to live, and hope to die.—But let deists urge what objections they please, we know in whom we have believed; and

we are persuaded, that he is able to keep that which we have committed to him against that day. Of the truth of the religion of Jesus (not now to mention its intrinsic excellence, the unspotted character of its author, nor the sure word of prophecy) God hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

With regard to the authenticity of this book of the Revelation of John, no part of the New Testament was more generally received during the two first centuries. It was numbered amongst the apostolic writings by the churches of Asia, and in Europe. The learned Mr. Lowman, and the great philosopher Sir Isaac Newton, both concur in this opinion, that no other books of the New Testament are so well attested as this.

The inspired penman informs the churches of Asia, that he, their brother in tribulation, received these divine revelations when he was banished to the island of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian for his firm adherence to the christian faith. In this desolate island, the Lord in whom he believed, and for whom he was then in banishment, graciously condescended to favour him with his peculiar presence. Of which you find a most animating

animating and sublime description in the beginning of this book. These gracious visitations of the Redeemer were given, no doubt, to comfort him in his solitude, and to secure his fidelity; but they were not given for that purpose only, but to be communicated to the churches of Christ, to strengthen the faith and encourage the perseverance of believers in future ages.

These revelations had reference not only to the state of the church at that time, but to their future state also. "Write the things, saith the Lord, which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

It follows of consequence, that there will be many parts of this book of the Revelation not so easy to be comprehended at present, since they relate to events which are many of them not yet come to pass; but which will certainly have their accomplishment when the fulness of their times are come. The fulfilment of those prophecies (the times of which are already past) gives us firm ground of faith and hope in those which are yet to be fulfilled.

Waving all further remarks on these revelations of John, I proceed immediately to

draw your attention to the passage which I have now read.

I shall endeavour to elucidate the several clauses of it, and aid you in extracting the consolation and counsel deducible therefrom.

“ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.”

Though it is only here expressed indefinitely, “ a voice from heaven,” yet the 15th verse, and indeed the style of the whole chapter, precisely fixes it to be the voice of an angel.

In the above cited verse we read, “ And another angel, &c.”—Angels are here mentioned in the preceding verses, and in those which follow.

The apostle Paul, speaking of the angels, saith, “ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation ? ”

The divine Redeemer, after having favoured his beloved disciple with his presence, sent these ministering spirits to reveal to him the counsels of Heaven. One of these

these heavenly messengers directed the suffering evangelist, to commit to writing what he should speak; that he might not himself forget the truths which were delivered to him, and that they might be handed down to ages to come.

Write, saith the heavenly voice—Write,
 “Blessed are the dead, which die in the
 “Lord, from henceforth.”

And to confirm the declaration of the angel, the holy Spirit of God gave its testimony to the truth of it.

“Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may
 “rest from their labours, and their works
 “do follow them.”

What an interesting doctrine to man, under the condemning sentence of death,
 “Blessed are the dead which die in the
 “Lord!”——And what an interesting truth to good men, under all their imperfections and frailties, that their works and labours of love will be had in everlasting remembrance, and that their sins, their infirmities, and weaknesses, shall be buried in eternal oblivion!

This beloved apostle was not commanded to write, Blessed are *all* the dead, but, Blessed are the dead *which die in the Lord*.

Our first inquiry then will be, Who are we to understand by those, "which die in the Lord."

As the times in which the apostle John lived were times of persecution, and as he was then under sentence of banishment, and might be under actual apprehension of suffering a cruel death, this consolatory truth, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," might in its primary signification have a particular reference to those who died martyrs to the cause of Christ; and thus designed to administer patience and fortitude to this apostle under his present and future sufferings, and to all other Christians who might be called to suffer in the same noble cause.

Archbishop Tillotson interprets this chiefly of those who die martyrs for the religion of Jesus.

But, surely, they are not *the only blessed*, who thus die in the Lord. Though to the glorious army of martyrs there appears to be appropriated a superior glory and more illustrious crown, for their firm unshaken fidelity under the most excruciating sufferings. This is evident from Rev. vii. 13, &c.

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto
"me,

“ me, What are those which are arrayed in
 “ white robes? And whence come they?
 “ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.
 “ And he said unto me, These are they which
 “ came out of great tribulation.”

To the Christians at Smyrna, who were
 cast into prison, and might be expecting cru-
 cifixion, the compassionate Redeemer pro-
 claimeth, “ Be thou faithful unto death, and
 “ I will give thee a crown of life.” Conform-
 able to what he had said to his disciples before
 his resurrection, “ he that will save his life
 “ shall lose it, but he that will lose his life for
 “ my sake and the gospel, shall find it.” Thus
 encouraged were the first Christians, and all
 in future times of persecution, to die in the
 Lord, in the faith and hope of the gospel; to
 take up their cross, and follow Christ. But
 further,

May not other Christians be said to die in
 the Lord, though they die not the death of
 martyrdom? Is there not a sense in which a
 natural death may be in the Lord, as well as
 a violent one? May not we also live and die
 in the faith and hope of the gospel? Are
 there no other of the dead blessed, but those
 who die at the stake, or upon the cross?
 What, then, are to become of all the faithful
 disciples

disciples of Christ, who live and die in peaceable times, when the churches have rest from persecution? Is the future kingdom of the Redeemer to consist of martyrs only?

These questions you will say are scarce necessary.

Other commentators think, with the bishop of Meaux, that to die in the Lord may mean, in general, to die in the faith and obedience of the gospel.

They, without doubt, may be said to die in the Lord, who have lived in the Lord—who believe, and have been baptized in his name—who have cordially accepted of Jesus Christ as their Saviour—voluntarily consecrated themselves to him, to be saved in his own appointed way, of faith, repentance, and obedience, in full reliance upon his merits and righteousness for salvation—who have made his gospel and his example the rule of their conduct, holding fast the profession of their faith, without wavering, even unto death. Dying even the death of martyrdom, supposes such to have previously believed. They would never suffer for a cause which they had not believed to be true. And such a faith the Spirit here testifies as to be productive of labour and work, and is not a dormant quiescent principle. So that *faith,*
labour,

labour, and *works*, are here supposed to precede the death of martyrdom.

It is the general doctrine of scripture, of Jesus Christ, and of his apostles, that faith alone is not sufficient for salvation. It must be a living faith, a faith that will produce good fruit; a principle that will operate, that will work by love, and influence to unre-served obedience. James ii. 20. "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

And hath not our Saviour himself testified, that not every one that saith, "Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he only who doeth the will of my father who is in heaven." Matthew vii. 21. And what hath the Saviour added in the following verses? He hath told us, that even working miracles in his name will not be sufficient proofs of their being his genuine disciples, without a religious character corresponding to his gospel. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

And

And if even teaching and prophesying in the name of Christ is not of itself sufficient to prove that we are true Christians, if *preaching* his gospel alone will not save *us*, is it to be imagined that *hearing* his gospel alone will save *you*? Our heavenly Instructor has cautioned you against this error at the close of his sermon on the mount. "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* ~~them not~~, shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. Matthew vii. 26, 27." We cannot then be said to live in the Lord by faith only, without a corresponding life and practice. We must walk by our faith, and live by our faith, or we cannot die in that faith with any scriptural ground of hope. In those who die in the Lord, our text supposeth good actions to have been produced; "and their works shall follow them." The phrase "rest from their labours" imports, that the life of a Christian is not a life of indolence and inactivity, but of exertion, zeal, and perseverance.

This is also forcibly represented in the New Testament by metaphors which denote the

the greatest ardour, strife, and energy. All, then, who have thus lived in the Lord, who have had their conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ, and who are faithful to the time of their departure out of the world, may justly be said to die in the Lord. I proceed now,

II. To elucidate the other parts of the text.

The meaning of the Greek word "*ἀπ' ἧς*," expressed in our translation "*from henceforth*," the learned Witius understands, "from the time of their death, immediately after their dissolution."

To the declaration of the angel is here added the testimony of the Holy Spirit; "Yea," saith the Spirit, "for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Rest from labour signifies more than the cessation of labour. *All* the dead are in such a state, and therefore this could not be specified as the peculiar privilege of those that die in the Lord. Besides, as death is also a cessation of all terrestrial happiness, that alone could not be deemed a blessedness; for most men wish rather to live than to die, even though their condition in life is not without trouble, sorrow, and labour.

Rest

Rest from labour, to be announced a blessedness, must include a consciousness of that rest, a sensation and perception of ease and tranquillity. What is rest from labour of body, or from anguish of mind, if we feel not that rest? It must then imply a consciousness, a sensibility, and actual enjoyment of real bliss and happiness.

In the promised land of Canaan the people of Israel had not only a cessation of the laborious exertions of war, but they there enjoyed all the blessings of peace. That was their promised earthly rest. And the apostle, speaking of the Christian's promised future state of existence, calls it a rest; "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God." Hebrews iv. 9. So that the blessedness, promised to those that die in the Lord, consists in their being happy, immediately after their dissolution, in the intermediate state; And at the final resurrection (when their spirit and reanimated dust shall again be united), that their happiness will rise higher in degree, to its full completion, when the kingdom of the Redeemer is finally perfected, and they enter into the joy of their Lord. The latter clause which the Spirit here testified, is this, "And their works do follow them;"

them ;” or, as it is in the original, “ follow
 “ *with them,*” “ *μετ’ αυτων.*” On which Mr.
 Baxter observes, that their works are said to
 go with, or accompany them, and not to
 come a thousand years after them.

That our works will accompany us, or, in
 other words, that our moral or immoral cha-
 racter will attend us, is the evident doctrine
 of the inspired scriptures. Nor can we have
 any conception of a man being separated from
 his character; our virtues or vices are our
 own acts, and every man will be applauded
 or condemned as his works have been.

“ Marvel not at this, for the hour is
 “ coming in the which all that are in their
 “ graves shall hear his voice, and shall come
 “ forth. They that have done good, to the
 “ resurrection of life; and they that have done
 “ evil, to the resurrection of damnation.”
 John v. 28, 29. “ For we must all appear
 “ before the judgment seat of Christ, that
 “ every one may receive the things done in
 “ his body, according to that he hath done,
 “ whether it be good or bad.” 1 Corinthians
 v. 10.

This is the doctrine of Jesus, and of his
 apostles, confirmed by the testimony of the
 Spirit.

Now it is here to be observed, that with

B

regard

regard to this latter phrase of the text, "and their works do follow them," it is only supposed, it can only be supposed, that those works do follow them from which happiness must arise; or otherwise, instead of the dead being blessed or happy, they would be miserable and unhappy.

The best of men have been sinners, and since their repentance, faith, and religious profession, are still not exempt from many involuntary sins, frailties, and imperfections; the recollection of these must be sources of sorrow and remorse. The holy and pious patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, though styled perfect and righteous men, have they not exhibited to the world great proofs of human frailty?

Since, then, all human characters are imperfect, if all their works were to follow them, their former wilful sins, their involuntary sins, and their much lamented weaknesses, they would subject them again to painful reflections, and their springs of sorrow would be opened afresh. It must therefore, I think, of consequence follow, that, with regard to all sincere Christians, to those who have lived and died in the Lord, no works shall follow them but those from which

which happiness shall arise; none but those that are sincere and praise-worthy. This is justly deducible from hence.

We are assured in the word of God, that our wilful sins, if truly repented of, will be blotted out and forgiven. It is on record, that to all who repent and believe the gospel, and who seek for mercy in and through the mediation, merits, and righteousness of Jesus Christ, their trespasses shall not be imputed to them. 2 Cor. v. 19. "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And again, Romans iv. 8. "Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John i. 7.

If then the wilful sins of men (sincerely repented of) will obtain divine forgiveness, we cannot suppose that their involuntary sins and frailties, which good men will sincerely lament, that these will be permitted to follow them to judgment to their condemnation, or to their disquietude. If wilful transgressions are blotted out, will not involuntary defects be blotted out also? One argument more to prove this point.

The divine Redeemer is said to present his

people *faultless* before the throne of God, to present his church *without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*. And in this chapter, from which my text is taken, the redeemed of the Lord are said to be *without fault*, before the throne of God. What are we to infer from hence, that not only wilful sins will be buried in everlasting oblivion, but their frailties and imperfections also; and, that through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will be received as though they had never offended: and neither their sins nor their frailties will be imputed to them. But their services, their labours, their works of piety and religion, as far as they are sincere, will be remembered to their everlasting advantage, their honour, their glory, and their eternal felicity. Not in the way of merit. No. For when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. Not to receive the reward of debt, but of grace. For every sincere humble Christian will acknowledge with the warmest gratitude, "By the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Cor. xiv. 10. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8.

It appears then, I think, very clear, that if the dead are blessed which die in the Lord,

no works will follow with them, or accompany them, which would occasion remorse or disquietude; since it would interrupt that blessedness: consequently that all the frailties and weaknesses from which the best of men are not exempt, will be obliterated, and their virtues and graces alone be mercifully remembered, applauded, and rewarded. "Well done, ye good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

But what that joy and future blessedness shall be, eternity itself can only disclose. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor can the heart conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him."

Jesus is our great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows our frame, and will remember that we are but dust. He has been tempted in all points as we are (sin only excepted). He knows our feeble state, and the dangers with which we are every where surrounded, and will make a favourable allowance for our many almost unavoidable infirmities. This merciful Saviour is also to be our judge; and will he who came to save his people from their sins, condemn them for their involuntary frailties, and their much lamented weak-

nesses? No, by no means; he will, if I may so speak, drop the tear of compassion upon the frailties of his people, and blot them out for ever. Feeling for our infirmities, he will forgive them all, and discerning with the greatest accuracy, and with unerring judgment, the sincere from the hypocrite, he will say to all his faithful, though imperfect disciples, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"Thus, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." I am now

III. To aid you in extracting the consolation and counsel which are evidently deducible from this passage of sacred writ.

First. How great is the consolation which this declaration of the angel, confirmed by the Holy Spirit, administers to all the faithful followers of Jesus Christ, when lamenting the loss of dear relatives and friends.

Are the dead *blessed* which die in the Lord?

"Why

"Why do we mourn departed friends,

"Or shake at Death's alarms?

"'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends

"To call them to his arms." WATTS.

At the dissolving of those fond attachments from which so great a part of our terrestrial felicity arises, when the most tender domestic ties are broken by death, a fear is the debt of nature, and we cannot withhold it. But we are not to sorrow as those that have no hope. Concerning the dead which die in the Lord, on their account, we have rather reason to rejoice than to mourn. Their state is to be envied, and not lamented. They have shot the gulf of death, and are landed safe on the heavenly shore. Would we wish them back again into this vale of tears? Their contest with sin and with the world is ended. They have obtained the victory. "They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

When king David heard that his favourite child was dead, for whom he had before fasted and wept, he ceased his weeping and fasting. Some of the royal household asked him the reason of this. He replied, "While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept,

“ for I said, who can tell, whether God” will
 “ be gracious to me, that the child may live.
 “ But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast?
 “ Can I bring him back again (by my mourn-
 “ ing and lamentation)? After which he adds,
 2 Sam. xii. 23. “ I shall go to him, but he
 “ shall not return to me.” — Thus we shall
 go to our departed friends, but they shall
 not return to us. The gospel gives us the
 sure and certain hope of a re-union with our
 friends in the mansions of the house of our
 heavenly Father, and never to be separated
 any more.

You who are the chief mourners on this
 solemn occasion, search the scriptures of God,
 and you will there find on record many pro-
 mises of consolation for you. God has gra-
 ciously been pleased to represent himself as
 your peculiar friend. The friend of the wi-
 dow and the fatherless.

Jeremiah xlix. 11. “ Leave thy fatherless
 “ children, I will preserve them alive. And let
 “ thy widows trust in me.” Psalm xxvii. 10.
 “ When father and mother forsake me (saith
 “ David) then the Lord will take me up.”
 Psalm xxxvii. 25. “ I have been young, and
 “ now am old, yet I never saw the righteous
 “ forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

And

And again, Psalm lxxviii. 5. "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow" "is God in his holy habitation." Comfort one another with these words.

2dly. The truth and doctrine of our text dissipate the gloom and horror of the grave, with regard to ourselves, if we are sincere Christians.

Death, at the decree of heaven, for transgression, was a curse upon man. But Jesus having finished transgression, and made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, hath converted the curse into a blessing to all his disciples. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

To the Christian, the sting of death is taken away, death itself is vanquished, and lies dead at the foot of the cross.

The human fear of death is exchanged for Christian confidence, exultation, and triumph.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Cor. xv. 55. O how immensely great are
our

our obligations to the benevolent Saviour of the world ! Death, to the Christian, is represented under the image of sleep, from which he shall awake at the voice of Jesus ; and awake to glory, honour, and immortality.

“ Precious in the sight of the Lord is the
“ death of his saints.” Psalm cxvi. 15.

“ A good name is better than precious oint-
“ ment, and the day of death to every good
“ man, is better than the day of his birth.”
Ecclesiastes vii. 1.

3dly. The faithful disciples of Jesus Christ may derive from hence great consolation under their many frailties and imperfections. That these, sincerely lamented, shall be no obstruction to their future final salvation. We may all be sincere, though not absolutely faultless. Sincerity is Christian perfection. If our greater transgressions, sincerely repented of, will not be imputed to us to our condemnation, certainly our lesser foibles will not, which, in this state of human frailty, are not totally to be prevented.

4thly. The last part of instruction to be deduced from hence is, that of counsel and exhortation.—You are hereby counselled and exhorted *to live in the Lord.*

If

If we wish to die the death of the righteous, our wish can only be attained by first living the righteous man's life.

Now the life of the righteous, or the life of the true Christian, is not a life of indolence—it is a life of work and labour. It is called in one place a fight, the fight of faith; in which contest great watchfulness and strife are necessary, if we would gain the victory and receive the crown. The Christian life is also metaphorically spoken of as a race in which we must run, and run with speed, if we would obtain the prize. And as a temple or building, which is a work of labour:—to form a truly religious character is not a matter of easy acquisition, in itself considered. And the opposition which the Christian must expect to meet with, makes the work still more difficult to accomplish—opposition both from within and from without. He has to fight his way through a host of foes, his enemies numerous and powerful; and his worst and most dangerous enemies are those of his own house. His evil propensities and irregular passions. To subdue these will require work and labour. And this is only negative goodness. This is only clearing away the old ruins, before we can begin
to

to raise the superstructure. The spiritual temple is yet to be erected; and as our terrestrial edifices are raised gradually by laying one stone upon another, so is this celestial edifice of religion to be raised, by adding one virtue to another, till the whole is completed. Giving all diligence, saith the apostle, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

A life of religion then is a life of labour and of work, and demands much time, from its rise, for its progress to perfection. No less than the whole time allotted us here in this world. For when can any man say that he has already attained, or, that he is already perfect? So that we must continue our labour, our watchfulness, our fidelity, and perseverance, even unto death. And the period of human life is the only time assigned us for this work, "Now is the accepted time, "now is the day of salvation." There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave.

Is it then wisdom to delay the interesting work of religion—to postpone it to a future period

period of time which may never arrive? Who can ensure to themselves one year more of life, one day, or even the next hour? Who can say, that they shall not die suddenly, or not be in a total state of insensibility in their last expiring days of life? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." How great is the issue depending! An eternity of happiness.—And if religion is neglected, all is lost for ever—and eternal misery must be the sad alternative.

There are two points in particular, of which a wise and unerring Providence appears to demand our serious observation, in the late sudden death of the senior Pastor of this church. He being dead, yet speaketh. This sudden departure out of life speaketh to us, on the one hand, of the danger of postponing the work of religion, the folly of trusting to what is called a death-bed repentance; and, on the other hand, the wisdom and safety of being uniformly and habitually religious; of having our lamps trimmed and our lights burning, and be as those that are waiting for their Lord. "For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

A good

A good life is the best security of a happy death.—“Whether we live, saith the apostle, “we live unto the Lord. And whether we “die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we “live or die, we are the Lord’s.”—And, finally,

What excitement have we to be continually abounding in good works—to do good *to all*, as we have opportunity (strangers and enemies not excepted), but especially to those that are of the household of faith; since our works and labours of love will be favourably remembered to our honour, and graciously rewarded, infinitely above all their desert.

And in what a most attractive engaging manner hath the benevolent Saviour (who was himself the peculiar friend of the poor, to whom the Gospel was first preached) drawn our attention to works of charity and mercy! Matthew xxv. 34th and following verses.

“Then shall the King say unto them on
“his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my
“Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
“you from the foundation of the world.

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave
“me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me
“drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me
“in

“ in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was
 “ sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison,
 “ and ye came unto me.

“ Then shall the righteous answer him,
 “ saying, Lord, When saw we thee an hun-
 “ gered, and fed thee ; or thirsty, and gave
 “ thee drink ? when saw we thee a stranger,
 “ and took thee in, or naked and clothed
 “ thee ? or when saw we thee sick, or in
 “ prison, and came unto thee ?

“ And the king shall answer, and say unto
 “ them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as
 “ ye have done it to one of the least of these
 “ my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

“ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye
 “ stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in
 “ the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye
 “ know that your labour is not in vain in the
 “ Lord.”

“ And I heard a voice from heaven say-
 “ ing, Write, Blessed are the dead which
 “ die in the Lord, from henceforth ; yea,
 “ saith the Spirit, for they rest from their
 “ labours ; and their works do follow them.”

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

The respect which I owe to the memory of your late senior Pastor, and the harmony and brotherly love in which we have executed our joint labours amongst you, will not permit me to take, as it were, my last leave of him, without a public tribute of testimony due to his worth and character.

The late Rev. Mr. Greaves, my fellow labourer in the Lord, was descended from pious parents, and, like Timothy, he knew the holy Scriptures from his youth. He received the first rudiments of his classical education under the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth of Sheffield, in the county of York, the place of his nativity. After finishing his grammar learning, he pursued his studies in the dissenting college in the town of Northampton, under the tuition of Dr. Doddridge, whose excellent writings are well known, and have been translated into most foreign languages.

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There he went through a course of theological lectures, preparatory for the work of the ministry, and left the college with an ample testimonial of his acquired erudition, and his acquaintance with the best authors, profane and sacred.

His first call to exercise the ministerial service was to a congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Palgrave in the county of Suffolk, where he was ordained. And a second testimonial given him by the ministers then assembled, of his learning, abilities, and moral character, which is inserted in the consistorial records of this church.

At the decease of the Rev. Mr. Loftus he was called from England to be copastor with the Rev. Mr. Sowden, of the English Presbyterian Church in this city, in the year 1752. The long period in which he has laboured amongst you with such general acceptation, for more than forty-five years, proves, I think, sufficiently, that he was possessed of considerable talents. He was master of the Greek and Latin languages, and had some knowledge of the Hebrew tongue. He was a man of sound understanding and judgment, no bigot, nor enthusiast; of an enlarged mind, and a benevolent heart; of

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candid,

candid, liberal sentiments, considering all as brethren who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, though of different religious persuasions. He was a man without guile, and without hypocrisy. An agreeable, cheerful, confidential friend, of no austerity of manners, nor affected singularity. The friend of the poor, and of the stranger, of great sensibility and feeling, especially as a parent. He was a good husband, and a good father.

As a minister, he spoke the things becoming sound doctrine. His faith rested upon the scriptures, and not upon the creeds and symbols of fallible men. It was his constant prayer, that we might declare to you the whole counsel of God, and keep nothing back. He preached to you faithfully what in his judgment he was convinced to be the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles, without fear, favour, or partial affection. In doctrine he shewed uncorruptedness and sincerity; sound speech, or reasoning, which could not be condemned; a passage of scripture which you must all well remember often to have heard from his lips. He discharged the duties of his office neither deceitfully nor negligently. Your late minister was not a
slothful

stodful servant in his Master's vineyard ; he was fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ; his heart was in his work ; preaching was his element ; he wished to be useful while he lived, and, if it was the will of God, he wished not to survive his usefulness. In our frequent conversations I have often heard him speak of a sudden death as not undesirable to a good man, and that he seemed rather to desire than to fear it.

It pleased God to gratify his wishes in these respects. He was useful to the last hour of his life ; having but a few minutes before just finished the labours of the day, when he was seized with a paralytic stroke, and continued in a state of insensibility to the moment of his death. He died on the Wednesday following, May 30th, 1798, in the 74th year of his age, and the 52d of his ministerial labours.

You who are yet living (and many others who have now departed this life), are, I I trust, as zealous to his ministry ; have been his joy here ; and will be his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. He has lived in the Lord, been faithful even unto death, and therefore has died in the Lord. He resteth
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from his labours, and his works do follow him: So conscientiously hath our late deceased brother acquitted himself in his ministerial function, that I doubt not; but he could have adopted in his last moments (if his sensibility had returned), the words of the apostle Paul, and said, with humble hope in Christ Jesus,

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.”
2-Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Remember him, my brethren, who has had the rule over you, not as having had dominion over your faith, but as a helper of your joy. Forget not his long services and labours of love; and let the fruit of his labours appear in the disposition of your minds and hearts in the daily actions of your lives, that having your fruit unto holiness, your end may be everlasting life.

Be ye followers of him as he was of Christ, who we trust is now inheriting the promises. To conclude,

As through this unexpected stroke of Divine

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vine Providence I am now left to labour alone amongst you, and as there is no expectation of another fellow labourer being called to this church, through the change of the civil constitution of this country, let me recommend myself to an increased earnestness in your prayers.

“ I beseech you, brethren, by the Lord
 “ Jesus Christ, and the love of the Spirit,
 “ that ye strive, together with me, in your
 “ prayer to God for me.”

“ Now our Lord Jesus Christ, and God,
 “ even our Father, who hath loved us and
 “ given us everlasting consolation, and good
 “ hope through grace, comfort your hearts,
 “ and establish you in every good word and
 “ work.” *Amen and Amen.*

THE END.

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ation of another fellow labourer being called
to this church, through the channel of the
civil constitution of this country, I am re-
solved to be to an increased exertion
in your prayers.



I believe I shall be the Lord's
Christ, the love of the world,
that we may live with me in your
prayer to God for me.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ and God,
even our Father, who hath loved us and
given us everlasting consolation, and good
hope through grace, comfort you by his
word, and establish you in every good word and
work. Amen and Amen.

THE END

